

Stranahan Stewardship Committee Meeting

April 20, 2015 Old School House Commons 6:30 pm.

Members Attending: Diana Batzel, Jim Brimblecombe, John Domey, Ed Jalbert, Jenny Warshow.

Guests Attending: Conservation Commission members: Sarah Norton, Anne Miller, Anne Reed; Select board members: Chris Martin, John Warshow; Will Walters of the Hardwick Gazette; Citizens: Bobbi Brimblecombe, Joseph Gainza, Sarah Fowler, Brett Engstrom; VT Mountain Bike Association members: Sarah Galbraith, Tristan Von Duntz, Tom Stuessy.

New Business: Sarah Galbraith presented proposal to construct a mountain bike trail through the Stranahan Town Forest to Members of the Stranahan Committee, Conservation Commission, Select board, and Community. The presentation was very thorough and touched on many issues including: definition, design, construction, use, volunteers, maintenance, signage, cost, liability, maps, code of conduct, education, the VT Mountain Bike Association, sustainability and more. Questions and concerns followed: more fragmentation; could any existing trails be reworked to accommodate bikes; vulnerability as a walker; wildlife impact, bird watching, could have set hours; would riders be mostly members of the club; would all riders be covered by liability, what would be the town's liability; effect on wetlands; sugar pipelines concerns, who would be responsible if lines get damaged; how much use would it get; would there be an agreement of assessment with the Stranahan Committee or town; Vermont Land Trust approval; and more. Sarah did her best to address each issue and concern. It was decided that the best next step would be to have the Brimblecombes walk the proposed trail with the bike club to see how it impacts the sugaring operation. At our next meeting, the Committee and interested parties will walk the proposed trail.

Discussion: At this point discussion turned to other agenda items. Jenny opened the floor to discussion of the survey results from town meeting with an eye to how the input could be used to revise the management plan. Comments included: where is the summary, too massive, not quantifiable; general sense that "it's" working; sense of gratitude, natural world has a voice; even if some people have not used it, they are glad it is there; good balance of use, people really enjoying it, testament to efforts of the committee; timber harvesting at acceptable rate; should we be concerned about foraging; fertilizing of hayfields; trapping; and more. Jenny went on to list ten points she had come up with of things to be done in the Stranahan Forest and also passed out booklets of *The Vermont Town Forest Stewardship Guide* put out by the Northern Forest Alliance. Our town forest has several mentions. Some further discussion ensued but at 9:05 the meeting broke up.

Actions: Brimblecombes will walk proposed bike trail with club members. Diana will post that next meeting will be at the forest to walk proposed bike trail.

Next meeting May 18,2015 @6:30pm Stranahan Town Forest, Jake Martin Road lot.

Minutes from 3/16/15 approved

Agenda: Walk proposed bike trail, approve minutes.

Approved: 6/15/15

Prepared by Diana Batzel